

THE CLAIMS DEFINING THE INVENTION ARE AS FOLLOWS:

1. A container adapted for lubricating an external longitudinal surface of an inflation needle which is suitable for inflating articles having a resiliently flexible, substantially gas tight valve, said container comprising an opening for passage
5 therethrough of at least a portion of the longitudinal length of said inflation needle, in a direction substantially aligned with a longitudinal axis of said inflation needle, and closure means for at least partially preventing passage of liquid or solid lubricant through said opening, said closure means being moveable from a closed position which at least partially prevents passage of liquid or solid lubricant
10 through said opening, to an open position to allow insertion of at least a portion of said inflation needle into said container via said opening, wherein, in said open position, said closure means is arranged to substantially allow equilibration of gas pressure within said container with gas pressure external of said container and at least partially prevent passage of liquid or solid lubricant through said opening,
15 while at least a portion of said inflation needle is inserted through said opening.
2. A container as claimed in claim 1 wherein said opening comprises a mouth of said container.
3. A container as claimed in claim 1 wherein said closure means comprises a sealing member having a resiliently flexible portion which is moveable
20 between said closed and open positions.
4. A container as claimed in claim 3 wherein said resiliently flexible portion is arranged to at least partially seal against a portion of said container and/or another portion of said sealing member, when in said closed position, to at least partially prevent passage of liquid or solid lubricant through said opening.
- 25 5. A container as claimed in claim 1 wherein said closure means comprises a valve.

6. A container as claimed in claim 5 wherein said valve is attached to said mouth of said container.

7. A container as claimed in claim 6 wherein said valve comprises a groove formed between two outwardly projecting flanges, said outwardly
5 projecting flanges being arranged to abut outer and inner surfaces of a wall of said container, adjacent said mouth of said container.

8. A container as claimed in any one of claims 5-7 wherein said valve further comprises a resiliently flexible flap which is arranged to move to said open position upon application of predetermined force to provide an opening in said
10 valve for passage therethrough of at least a portion of said inflation needle.

9. A container as claimed in any one of claims 1-8 wherein said container is at least partially filled with a liquid and/or solid lubricant.

10. A container as claimed in claim 9 wherein said solid lubricant comprises lubricating particles at least partially comprising a solid lubricant.

15 11. A container as claimed in any one of claims 1-8 wherein said container is at least partially filled with lubricant absorbent material which is arranged to absorb and therefore disperse a lubricant throughout at least part of an internal volume of said container.

20 12. A container as claimed in claim 9 wherein said container is at least partially filled with liquid absorbent material which is arranged to absorb and therefore disperse said liquid lubricant throughout at least part of an internal volume of said container.

13. A container as claimed in claim 11 or claim 12 wherein said lubricant absorbent material includes wadding.

25 14. A container as claimed in any one of claims 1-8 further comprising particles which are arranged to fill at least a portion of said internal volume of said

container and disperse liquid and/or solid lubricant throughout at least a portion of said internal volume of said container.

15. A container adapted for lubricating an external longitudinal surface of an inflation needle which is suitable for inflating articles having a resiliently flexible substantially gas tight valve, said container comprising an opening for passage therethrough of at least a portion of the longitudinal length of said inflation needle, in a direction substantially aligned with a longitudinal axis of said inflation needle, said container being arranged to contain a plurality of lubricating particles formed at least partially of a solid lubricant wherein said particles and said opening are sized to prevent passage of said particles through said opening.

16. A container as claimed in claim 10 or claim 15 wherein said lubricating particles are resiliently flexible to facilitate passage of said lubricating particles through said opening upon resilient deformation of said lubricating particles.

17. A container as claimed in claim 10 or claim 15 further comprising opening means for opening said container to enable capturing of said lubricating particles within said container.

18. A container as claimed in claim 17 wherein said opening means comprises a larger closeable opening closeable via closing means, said opening being arranged for passage therethrough of said lubricating particles upon movement of said closing means to an open position.

19. An inflation needle storage device comprising a body forming a passage which extends at least partly through said body, said passage being arranged for receipt of an inflation needle which is suitable for inflating articles having a resiliently flexible, substantially gas tight valve, said passage being arranged to receive said inflation needle so that a longitudinal axis of said inflation needle, when appropriately received within said passage, is substantially aligned with a longitudinal axis of said passage, said body including resiliently flexible retaining means which is arranged to form at least a portion of said passage, said

resiliently flexible retaining means being arranged to resiliently deform upon insertion of said inflation needle into said passage so that it applies a predetermined force to an external surface of said inflation needle when it is inserted into said passage to result in said inflation needle being retained within
5 said passage until predetermined forces are applied to said inflation needle and said body to remove said inflation needle from said passage.

20. An inflation needle storage device as claimed in claim 19 wherein said resiliently flexible retaining means comprises said body, said body being solid except for said passage and formed of resiliently flexible material such as high
10 density foam rubber.

21. An inflation needle storage device as claimed in claim 19 or claim 20 wherein said passage has a diameter which when undeformed is larger than a diameter of a portion of said inflation needle which is designed for passage through a resiliently flexible, substantially gas tight valve of a container which is
15 designed for inflation with said inflation needle, and smaller than an enlarged end of said inflation needle which is arranged for threadable connection to a pump.

22. An inflation needle storage device as claimed in any one of claims 19-21 wherein said body includes a plurality of said passages.

23. An inflation needle storage device as claimed in any one of claims
20 19-22 wherein said body further comprises another passage, said other passage being larger in diameter than said passage and being arranged for passage of a flexible elongated member therethrough, said body being arranged to hang from a lower end of said flexible elongated member upon supporting of said flexible elongated member.

25 24. A method of storing an inflation needle which is suitable for inflating containers having a resiliently flexible, substantially gas tight valve, said method comprising the step of:

inserting said inflation needle into a passage formed in a resiliently flexible member so that a longitudinal axis of said inflation needle substantially coincides with a longitudinal axis of said passage and said resiliently flexible member is at least partially resiliently deformed by the presence of an enlarged end of said
5 inflation needle, which, in use, is arranged for threadable connection to a pump, within said passage.

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